

ST. LEONARD, MD – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) participated in former State Senator Bernie Fowler's 25th Annual Wade-In today at Jefferson Patterson Park. Following his remarks, Congressman Hoyer presented Fowler with a U.S. Flag flown over the Capitol and a Congressional Record statement commending him for starting this effort to emphasize the importance of working together to clean up Maryland's Patuxent River – a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay.

“When taking stock of the health of the Patuxent River and our stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay, there's no index more important than Bernie's 'Sneaker Index,' which has been our leading non-scientific measure of the river's health for 25 years,” **stated Congressman Hoyer**. “I want to thank Bernie for his dedication and moral leadership on the issue of water conservation in Maryland. We have a special responsibility to protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and I join Bernie in fighting on behalf of its clean-up and conservation.”

Bernie Fowler held the first Patuxent River Wade-In in 1988 to assess how far he could wade into the river until he could no longer see his white sneakers, a non-scientific measurement known as the “Sneaker Index.” Each year since then, elected officials and local residents participate in the event, walking hand-in-hand into the waters of the Patuxent River to gauge the health and cleanliness of the waterway. This year the index was 35 inches.